



Committee on Homeland Security

Democrats
Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

www.house.gov/hsc/democrats/

May 26, 2005

Contact: Jennifer Porter Gore
Nadra Harrison
202.226.2616

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson Urges the Department to Improve Inspection Process on International Cargo Entering the United States

WASHINGTON—Representative Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, issued the following statement in response to a report released today by the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO), “Key Cargo Security Programs Can Be Improved,” which underscores the need for major reforms to the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism program (C-TPAT).

“The GAO report on C-TPAT comes as no surprise to us, as we have expressed concerns regarding this program for more than a year. While C-TPAT was initially implemented to deter potential terrorist attacks on cargo, the program’s security gap clearly is an avenue for smugglers and potential terrorist to cause harm to our ports. The Department must develop better oversight to ensure that all cargo from foreign seaports is inspected thoroughly. With thousands of companies receiving the benefit of reduced inspections with no idea if these companies have secure supply chains means that C-TPAT has a lapse in its security.”

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, Robert Bonner, head of Customs and Border Protection, introduced C-TPAT as a way to fully inspect and secure all cargo before it arrives at a U.S. port of entry. Last month, Representative Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) introduced an amendment to the Committee’s first authorization bill that would have strengthened the validation process of C-TPAT.

###